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SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: ADRIATIC CHARTER & NEW PFP MEMBERS  
ADDRESS BALKANS SECURITY ISSUES, NATO ENLARGEMENT ON JUNE 28

REF: SKOPJE 533

#### SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) During an Adriatic Charter (Albania, Croatia, Macedonia) Partnership Commission in Ohrid June 28, USNATO Ambassador Nuland urged the A-3 aspirant countries to: accelerate progress on NATO reforms, demonstrate and describe their readiness for membership in demarches to other NATO Allies, and accept that there would be no "package approach" to membership decisions. She encouraged the three new Pfp countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia) to consider contributing to NATO operations, pursuing International Partnership Action Plans (IPAP), and sending Military Liaison Officers to the Partnership Coordination Cell at SHAPE.

¶2. (SBU) The A-3 members highlighted the considerable progress they had made in meeting NATO standards, but accepted that there was a lot to do and little time in which to complete remaining reforms required for membership. The new Pfp members said they were taking steps to move toward full Pfp participation (requiring Serbia to submit a Presentation Document and all to conclude Security Agreements, and then moving on to NATO training and interoperability tools) and that they hoped to join the Adriatic Charter to enhance mutual cooperation and regional stability. End summary.

#### A-3 PARTNERSHIP COMMISSION MEETS

¶3. (U) Macedonia chaired a meeting of the Adriatic Charter Partnership Commission in Ohrid on June 28, in the runup to the NATO EAPC Security Forum held in the same town on June 29. The meeting was the last A-3 event chaired by Macedonia, which passed the reins to Croatia on July 1. Attending the first segment of the two-part session were delegates from the U.S. (USNATO Ambassador Nuland and Ambassador Milovanovic); NATO Deputy SecGen Minuto Rizzo; Albania (FM Lulzim Basha); Croatia (FM Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic and MOD Berislav Roncevic); and Macedonia (FM Milososki and MOD Elenovski). Attending the expanded session, in addition to the A-3 delegates, were new Pfp Partners Bosnia and Herzegovina (MOD Selmo Cikotic), Montenegro (MOD Vucinic), and Serbia (D/FM Georgevic standing in for FM Jeremic, who arrived later from a Council of Europe session in Strasbourg).

## A-3 WORKING TO MEET NATO STANDARDS

14. (SBU) NATO Deputy SecGen Minuto Rizzo noted the progress the A-3 members have made since the charter was signed in 2003 which had, he emphasized, helped its members develop "habits of cooperation." He urged the A-3 to take advantage the next MAP cycle and to make "the last effort" to ensure they were strong candidates for NATO membership at the next NATO summit. Albanian FM Basha replied that NATO and the US had sent strong public signals of support for the A-3 aspirants, as well as indicating clearly steps the aspirants still had to take to strengthen their candidacies. He noted that Albania had formed a bi-partisan committee to focus on NATO membership-related legislation, had drafted an action plan on NATO membership, and had formed a committee on electoral reform to further the country's NATO candidacy.

15. (SBU) Croatian FM Grabar-Kitarovic focused on her government's recent successes in combating corruption, including recent arrests in a privatization-related corruption case. She also pointed to the government's success in boosting public support for Croatia's NATO membership bid, with over 50 percent of the public now consistently supporting membership. She highlighted Croatia's contributions to ISAF operations in Afghanistan, adding that force levels would increase from the current deployment of 200 troops to 300 in 2008. The government also hoped to boost military spending to 2 percent of GDP by 2010.

16. (SBU) FM Milososki outlined progress Macedonia has made in strengthening political consensus, and noted the strong support for Macedonia's NATO membership bid that had been reflected in a recent parliamentary resolution on NATO. The

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government would step up its efforts to combat corruption and trafficking in persons, he said. Milososki acknowledged that there still was a long road ahead for the three NATO aspirants. MOD Elenovski noted progress the country has made on defense reforms, and said the MOD was working to improve the ethnic balance in the armed forces.

17. (SBU) Ambassador Nuland praised the A-3 for the progress they have made since 2003, but urged them not to rest on their laurels -- there was still much for them to do. Croatia had to stay focused on boosting public support for NATO membership, Albania was still "on the cusp" of demonstrating democratic maturity with its Presidential selection process under way. Macedonia had to continue working to strengthen its democratic institutions and demonstrate progress in addressing ethnic minority concerns. She said a USG interagency team would visit the aspirant countries in early November to review their progress and would then begin formulating recommendations regarding which of the countries were ready for membership. The U.S. was only one of 26 Allies, however, and each A-3 country would need to lobby other Allies for support. Ambassador Nuland also stressed that there would be no "package approach" to membership -- each aspirant would be judged on its own merits.

## NEW PFP COUNTRIES -- MOVING TOWARD FULL MEMBERSHIP

18. (SBU) The new PFP country delegates said that they hoped to complete the accession process to full Partnership in the next several weeks. They expressed their desire to join the Adriatic Charter in order to further enhance their cooperation and regional stability. The Serbian Deputy FM focused on Kosovo as the nation's top priority, along with making progress on Euro-Atlantic integration goals, enhancing cooperation with the ICTY, lowering Serbia's unemployment rate, and tackling crime and corruption more effectively.

19. (SBU) Ambassador Nuland noted that the Riga Summit decision to offer PFP to the new members had been "historic,"

and urged the three countries to consider joining in NATO-led operations. She also urged them to think about concluding IPAPs, and about assigning Liaison Officers to SHAPE. NATO membership criteria could be used by each country, she said, to strengthen internal reform processes.

KOSOVO STATUS -- NEED TO BE CLEAR ABOUT THE OUTCOME

¶10. (SBU) Macedonian FM Milososki said that any resolution of the Kosovo status question should contribute to stability in the region. He added that "final status would be better than the status quo," but warned against unilateral steps by any party. Albanian FM Basha noted that further delays in moving ahead on Kosovo status would have a negative impact on peace and security in the region. The Ahtisaari plan would, he added, "help us all face in the same direction" and ensure that the will of the peoples in the region was carried out.

¶11. (SBU) The Serbian MFA representative said his country wanted more time for continued discussions with Kosovo. NATO and the UN should "not underestimate Serbia's ability to compromise" and reach a solution acceptable to both sides. Ambassador Nuland pushed back, saying that any extension of talks had to be conditioned on the understanding that the end result of those discussions would be supervised independence.

¶12. (U) This cable has been cleared by USNATO and EUR/RPM.  
MILOVANOVIC